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ABSTRACT

As the 21st century approaches, the question about what the appropriate means and ends in education should be has become embedded within a larger societal concern for fostering greater equity and excellence. This paper raises a set of historical and contemporary issues related to understanding educational reform and school improvement within the larger context of enhancing educational equity and excellence in schools. It proposes arguments and provides examples to suggest that most large-scale, policy-based educational reform initiatives in American education have essentially failed and/or have failed to be maintained because of a lack of understanding of schools as complex organizations and sociocultural entities, failure to understand issues related to meaningful educational change, and faulty conceptions of the meaning of excellence and equity in education. The paper presents a perspective that defines equity and excellence in terms of the quality of actual teaching and learning processes at the classroom level (microanalysis) and at the individual school level (mesoanalysis). It offers the following working proposition: Future policy-based initiatives to enhance equity and excellence will only be sustained and successful to the extent that they are designed and primarily understood at the microanalysis level and secondarily at the mesoanalysis level. The paper presents two recent large-scale, policy-based reform initiatives targeting the enhancement of educational equity and excellence in Louisiana as problematic examples of faulty policy development and implementation. The paper concludes that the failures of many past reforms to enhance equity and excellence are tied to policy-analysis models that focus on macroanalysis concerns. One table is included. (Contains 38 references.) (LMI)

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Equity and Excellence in America's Schools: The Case for "Learning Equity" and a Proposed Model for Analyzing Statewide Education Reform Initiatives

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Equity and Excellence in America's Schools: The Case for "Learning Equity" and a Proposed Model for Analyzing Statewide Education Reform Initiatives

Historically, the most important policy-based question about American education is: What are the appropriate means and ends of education? In the 20th century, and as we approach the 21st century, this question has been embedded within a larger societal concern for fostering greater ***equity*** (equal access to educational opportunities and resources by students) and ***excellence*** (quality of schooling processes and learning outcomes in student learning) in education. As used here, equity and excellence recognize individual differences among students in their abilities and needs. Excellence implies actualization of the individual student's potential, not an imposed collective standard. This viewpoint is somewhat at odds with more traditional views of equity and excellence reflected in concern for setting performance standards for educational accountability using standardized tests. Measuring educational excellence in the United States has, since 1709, generated repeated attempts by policy-makers to produce some indication that learning progress vis `a vis outputs has occurred (Cohen and Haney, 1980; Britell, 1980; Darling-Hammond, 1993). Cycles of policy making which target educational reforms and improvement have been described as vacillating between teacher-centered and student-centered concerns (Cuban, 1990; Pogrow, 1996). A variety of historical events well document early concerns for excellence, and later concerns for excellence and equity in American education.

A Little History

In Britell's chronology (in Jaeger, 1980) we learn that in early 1700 concern for American education advanced the efforts made by the appointed Committee of Gentlemen for a Liberal Education (1709) to examine teaching proficiency. A relatively short time later, the Massachusetts General Court

(1789) in Boston, initiated policy whereby student proficiency[1] would be scrutinized (ends) thereby providing insight relevant to attaining excellence through teaching reforms (means). From Britell's historical account, progression of a vision for large-scale results related to educational excellence is evident by the movement away from a Pass-Fail grading system to one in which student proficiency would be categorized (e.g., five letter grade or three point scales). Written exams (1845) were initially viewed as the best possible way to measure teaching proficiency and easily gained acceptance during the era deemed as the "age of the standard" where uniformity and quality were greatly valued (Britell, 1980). In retrospect, the focus upon student proficiency (ends) can be seen historically to revolve around policy-based attempts to understand the impact made by teaching (means). This focus understandably increased the level of concern for pedagogy when continued test results (reflecting performance of only the best scholars), like those found by Horace Mann, secretary of the Boston School Committee[2], showed student proficiency lower than that expected.[3] During the 1900s, early compulsory attendance laws (means), amidst the cost of expanding educational services, though advocated as a means for national improvement (ends), were dampened by continuing reports of low student proficiency (e.g., Rice, 1897)[4] (Lortie, 1975; Britell, 1980).

Developing excellence in American schools eventually initiated movement from a student-centered (e.g., testing), toward a more teacher-centered focus with the emergence of state normal schools. Such schools were valued as the vehicle for improving educational quality because of the uniformity, standardization and consistency in teacher preparation they could provide, thus creating

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[1] Proficiency we are reminded was never defined.

[2] Committee responsible for the development and administration of examinations.

[3] Results (1845): where only the best scholars had been examined 45% met expectations in history, 39% in astronomy, 35% in arithmetic, 34% in geography (Britell, pp. 49-50).

[4] First educational report on student's failure.

an interest in teacher competency (Britell, 1980). As a result, curriculum revisionists worked diligently toward the development, and encouragement of a policy-base for a "teacher proof" curriculum as a means of enhancing educational excellence for students (Lortie, 1975; Darling-Hammond, 1993). Concern for better teacher licensing and credentialing by states began to rapidly expand in the 1950s, 60s and 70s. The use of paper and pencil tests, and the use of standardized on-the-job assessment procedures by states to credential teachers has greatly expanded during the past 20 years (Ellett, 1990). Concern for the professionalization of teaching and national credentialing of teachers is also well-reflected in the work of the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

Concern for excellence and equity in education has also been historically reflected in major legal and financial arenas. The 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision, the subsequent Civil Rights movement and national school integration, increased allocations of tax dollars to support compensatory education programs (e.g., Head Start, Follow Through, Chapter I), Public Law 94-142, state-mandated calls for funding equity among schools reflected since the 1920s in egalitarian-based attempts to create minimum foundation formula funding for schools (Strayer-Haig MFP, 1923) (Cohen, & Haney, 1980), and attempts to establish linkages between resource allocations for schools and school productivity (increased achievement levels) (Hanushek, 1986; Fowler, & Walberg, 1991; Harp, 1994), are all cases in point.

Movements to hold schools accountable (for student achievement) during the past 25 years are well reflected in a multitude of state level policy initiatives to establish (and test for) **minimum competency** levels for students for grade level promotion and high school graduation, and for teachers for initial and renewable certification (Jaeger, 1980; Ellett, 1990; Millman, & Darling-Hammond, 1990). These mandates are typically grounded in an educational ***equity and excellence*** rationale that

is reflective of a larger set of egalitarian social and political philosophies (Britell, 1980). As such, concerns for education are linked to increasing the quality of life and more recently, to economic productivity and competition in the global economy (Cohn & Geske 1990). Increasing interest for assessment-driven accountability models for teachers and students and outcomes-based schooling (Oneill, 1994) are a current, popular admixture of teacher and student-centered responsibilities for enhancing educational equity and excellence.

The current, continuing debate about appropriate means and ends relations and equity and excellence issues in American education is well documented by the continued focus on: standardized teacher assessments for credentialing and student testing, concern for national educational goals and minimum literacy standards for all citizens (e.g., Goals 2000), establishment of national curriculum-based standards for core curricula (e.g., science, math, english, history, etc.), the new constructivism, creation of opportunity to learn standards for schools, increased concern for funding equity among schools and the fair distribution of educational technology (i.e., computers), privatization of schools, school choice, charter schools, school voucher systems, development of school productivity indicators and procedures for bankrupting schools, and more recently, affirmative action and equal access to schools and schooling. Clearly, equity and excellence are at the avowed core of these continuing policy-based initiatives in American education. But.....have these initiatives worked to improve schools and student learning to any great degree? If so...from what/whose perspective? If not....why not? These important questions have received recent and ongoing debate and uncertainty remains about the proper means and ends of American education (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993).

Purpose

The purposes of this paper are to: 1) argue that past definitions of educational equity and excellence

are conceptually narrow and out of step with the extant knowledge base related to the enhancement of student learning; 2) describe the results of a large, statewide assessment of the quality of teaching and learning in some 7,000 classrooms from the excellence and equity and failed policy-based reform perspectives; 3) conduct a critical analysis of a new state level school performance evaluation model as a newly proposed reform; and 4) propose a new conceptual framework believed useful for guiding future theory, research, policy making and practices related to the enhancement of equity and excellence in education. The section that follows presents some perspectives and arguments about policy based initiatives and excellence and equity in American education.

Some Notes on Learning Equity

One of the arguments made in this paper is that while there have historically been many attempts to establish greater equity in American Education, these attempts have not been very successful because of the faulty conceptualization and definition of educational equity. Equity issues have historically been raised about access to schools, school funding, curricula, standardization, access to instructional materials (currently technologies such as computers), instructional time and opportunity to learn and so on. *The argument made here is that true equity in education can only be understood in terms of pupil learning (a continuous, active, ongoing process...not an achievement test score) which is integrally tied to the core technology of schools (the quality of teaching).* Thus, the appearance of having achieved equity among school with equal minimum foundation formula funding means little if some students are exposed on a daily basis to higher quality teaching and learning environments than other students, or if particular students within a class are treated with unequal opportunities for participating in teaching and learning activities. Therefore, *true equity in education can only be defined in terms of the quality of teaching and learning activities that occur every day in classrooms.*

Some Perspectives on Policy-Based Initiatives to Enhance Equity and Excellence

While some have written about effective educational reforms (Murphy, 1989; Odden A. & Marsh, D. , in press;), this paper argues that most past and more recent national and state policy-based initiatives to enhance equity and excellence among America's schools have essentially failed. Such failures are believed to be due to: 1) the lack of adequate conceptualization of the relationship between educational policy making, implementation and evaluation environments (Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980); 2) failure of policy makers and education program developers and implementers to understand the complexities of the process of meaningful organizational change (Fullan and Stiegelbauer, 1990); 3) an existing structure of political cycles that are "out of step" with what is known about the process of school improvement, meaningful reform and change (Cuban, 1990); 4) the failure to understand schools as complex organizations and social systems, and to understand school culture (Hoy and Miskel, 1996); and 5) the failure to understand, adequately assess, and improve the core technology of schools (teaching) and the most important educational **means**) and its relationship to students' learning and learning equity (the most important educational **ends**).

The Essential Argument

The description of historical events related to excellence and equity presented in this paper, document an inadequate conceptualization of the fit between policy-based initiatives to improve educational outcomes, equity and excellence relative to their program implementation and how results will be evaluated. For example, the ***excellence*** presumed to occur as a result of large-scale initiatives, in the case of compulsory attendance (1900), eventually met with considerable criticism (e.g., regarding loss of voluntary attendance forcing teachers and students together) and leading to future restrictions on corporal punishment, as a means of classroom control (Lortie, 1975). A pattern begins to emerge

which suggests that along the way toward school-level or classroom-level implementation, policy-based initiatives become diffused and in some cases no longer reflect the original problem, policy or it's intent.

The intent of policies designed to teacher-proof curricula (1950s) (Darling-Hammond, 1993) could be construed as the devaluation of teacher competency in the public school system. In fact, the need to teacher proof the curricula negates the prior popular notion held that a free compulsory public education was a means to national improvement through its acquiescence to the apparent mismatch between what policy-makers believed would be an effective means, and its fit among the curricula being taught, teaching quality provided and type of improvement expected. This brief look into two large-scale policy-based initiatives reflects the view that costly large-scale initiatives filter through the agents of change during implementation (e.g., societal and organizational change) leaving behind related contemporary issues (e.g., classroom management, school choice, professional development, alternative schools program ...) (Lortie, 1975). Policy-based initiatives continue to evolve around visions to bring about educational excellence and equity (H.B. 1840) through means strikingly similar to those in existence almost one hundred years ago (e.g., privatization of schools, school choice, charter schools, school voucher systems, and alternative schools). Thus, the more we attempt to change schools through large-scale, policy-based initiatives, the more they seem to stay the same.

We have had a variety of recent experiences with such initiatives in Louisiana during the past ten years or so. These initiatives typically are proffered as new ideas and important means to achieve educational ends to various constituencies concerned with the quality of public education in our state. Typically, they are wrapped within the rhetoric of meaningful educational reform and change, school improvement, school effectiveness, and increased educational equity and excellence. Most of those

efforts have come and gone with little residual effect on improving schools in Louisiana or enhancing educational equity and excellence for Louisiana's children. Why? The following section provides a description of a past statewide effort to reform teaching and learning in Louisiana that has, like many others come and gone. This example is followed by a new statewide reform effort popularly touted as a means to add accountability and to improve Louisiana's schools. Each of these reform efforts is briefly described and some examples are used to illustrate the arguments made in this paper.

The Children First Act and Statewide Teacher Evaluation

Buddy Roemer was elected as the new Governor of Louisiana in 1987 on a publicly popular educational reform agenda. In 1988, the Louisiana State Legislature passed the Children First Act which was a sweeping piece of legislation that had the improvement of teaching at its core through three guaranteed yearly salary increases, a reindexing of the state teacher salary schedule and the on-the-job assessments/evaluations of all 45,000 teachers for the purpose of certification and recertification.

Louisiana State University was contracted by the Louisiana State Board of Education (BESE) to develop the assessment and evaluation system to certify all teacher in 1988. After three years of research and development on the System for Teaching and learning Assessment and Review (STAR) (Ellett, Loup & Chauvin, 1991) and the intensive training of evaluators (principals, master teachers, state evaluators) from every building in Louisiana, statewide evaluation of some 7,000 teachers was implemented in the 1990-91 school year. In July of 1990, teacher received as promised by Governor Roemer and the legislature, the third consecutive pay raise (which was for some teachers as much as 30% over three years). Almost immediately after the Governor had signed the 1990-91 fiscal year

budget (which included the raises) the teacher unions in Louisiana filed a number of law suits against the new statewide teacher evaluation effort.

The new teacher evaluation program was implemented statewide during the 1990-91 school year with some 7,000 teachers. During the first full program implementation year, teacher unions and other groups continuously, vigorously and loudly criticized the new program from every angle. First it was called invalid, then unreliable, then unfair, then totally unworkable! Under extreme political pressure from teacher groups and grassroots constituents, the Louisiana Legislature passed a resolution during the early summer of 1991 to halt the new reform program for review and modification. Assessments for some 500 teachers who had scored below certification standards during the 1990-91 assessment year were nullified by BESE with no consequences. However, teachers who had scored at a superior level, and who qualified for a Model Career Options Program (more pay for additional professional work) received continued extra compensation as ***master teachers.*** This statewide, politically-based educational reform effort in Louisiana failed during the program implementation stage. Clearly, in this instance, and consistent with the arguments made here, this statewide reform was unsuccessful. Wrapped in the rhetoric of enhancing the quality of teaching (educational ends) to better the learning of students (educational ends), this program was unsuccessful for all of the reasons for program failure cited in the discussion of policy-based initiatives described above.

Two pieces of information from this statewide teacher evaluation effort, however, are to particular interest given the purposes of this paper. First, are the results of statewide, classroom-based assessments with the STAR in some 7,000, randomly selected classrooms in Louisiana during the 1989-90 R&D year. The results of these assessments showed rather low scores for a variety of components of effective teaching. For example, of some 77,000 judgments made by principals and

teachers about the quality of teaching and learning activities related to the development of higher order thinking skills (in randomly selected classrooms in their own schools), only 21% were considered acceptable. A variety of other assessment scores statewide were much lower than might be expected as well (e.g., elements of classroom management, monitoring and maintaining students' active involvement/engagement in learning, content accuracy and emphasis, etc.) These statewide assessment data were collected under conditions that reflected the quality of teaching and learning in Louisiana's classrooms under everyday (typical conditions). A full accounting of these results can be found in Hill, Claudet, Loup, Chauvin & Naik, (1991) (see result in Table 1 for examples of assessment summaries).

By way of contrast, statewide summaries of STAR assessment data from the first full program implementation year (when certification decisions were to be made) (1990-91) showed that some 95% of all teacher assessed met BESE approved standards. Difficulties with the certification standards-setting model aside (e.g., Ellett, Loup, Naik, Chauvin, & Claudet, 1995), the statewide results clearly showed that with few exceptions, Louisiana teachers *measured up!* What are the implications of comparing the statewide data reflecting everyday practice to the result of the state certification assessments for the essential arguments made here?

First, the R&D results clearly show that the quality of everyday teaching and learning in Louisiana's classrooms is below what most wanting to improve education desire. Secondly, the certification results show considerable score inflation relative to everyday practice, either an indication that teachers are capable of doing more than evident in everyday practice; or that assessors succumb to the social demand characteristics of making tough decisions (in this case certification decisions) by inflating scores. When the Children First Act was passed, there was little or no discussion of these

possibilities among policy makers, though there was considerable evidence to support this possibility in the teacher assessment and evaluation literature. The rather low quality of teaching and learning in everyday practice in these statewide analyses (see Table 1) raises a considerable number of issues about learning equity as defined/discussed above. These results suggest that the rhetoric of achieving greater excellence and equity in Louisiana's schools as reflected in the Children First Act (and as some attest was well-documented in the statewide certification assessment results) was indeed not fulfilled by this new statewide, policy-based initiative.

The section that follows provides an overview and brief discussion of yet another reform in Louisiana's schools that is currently under considerable discussion and development. This new reform is a centerpiece of a new administration's attempt to implement a statewide, policy-based initiative to improve educational equity and excellence in Louisiana's schools.

The School Improvement Act and School Performance Model

The Louisiana Legislature has increased efforts to improve accountability of the Minimum Foundation Program administered by the State Department of Education. As part of those efforts, related issues, dealing with equity and excellence, have helped generate the shared perception that an effective link between scarce financial resources and schools is needed. Thus, the concept of the School Performance Model (SPM) began. The most effective use of financial resources is seen in terms of producing/improving student outcomes. This concept is currently gaining political acceptance and support and is part of a four-phased school improvement plan of action. Phase one of the plan identifies schools in need of improvement or assistance. Phase two requires on-site observations of schools needing assistance (based on variables within control of the school). Phase three of the plan

requires development of a school action plan focused on improving weak areas and monitor progress. Phase four requires reassessment of standardized achievement test scores and holding schools accountable for results. As part of that plan, the State Department of Education is now directing the attention of all bureau personnel toward identifying what or how state level efforts are or can be related to improvement of either schools or student achievement.

The School Performance Model (SPM), still under development, is essentially grounded in the rational systems precepts of educational production function models (Walberg, H.J. 1980). As such, the SPM operates under the assumption that the resource mix (inputs) serves as educational treatments to yield outputs (student achievement). More specifically, the model assumes that improving conditions at the school level vis `a vis the allocation of resources will result in an overall improvement in levels of student achievement. Technically, the SPM will serve as an assessment tool by which school effectiveness (the capacity to produce a result or outcome) is judged relative to the school's capacity (e.g., preexisting conditions) for performance. The basic SPM then is a rational, statistically-based approach to identifying schools that are achieving well below expectations that subsequently may be impacted with school improvement plans. Preliminary results using the SPM verify past research findings that have been well documented in the past (e.g, socioeconomic variables explain most of the total variation among schools in levels of student achievement).

Most criticisms of these kinds of models for identifying less effective schools to then impact them in view of enhancing equity and excellence center on their reliance on rational systems, on expediency rather than theory rather than the extant knowledge base about schools as organizations and social systems (Hoy and Miskel, 1996). Taking the road to expediency with such models is fraught with other obstacles that have been identified in the literature during the past thirty years. For

example, the notion that educational (or economic) inputs equal outcomes cannot be supported with any consistency (Cohn and Geske, 1990).

Another criticism of using production function models like the proposed Louisiana SPM is the failure of such models to accommodate findings from the latest educational research studies that point out the importance of understanding school culture, the complexities of schools as social systems and organizations, the uniqueness of schools, the mismatch between school curricula, the quality of teaching and learning and the content focus of standardized achievement tests and so on. These factors and a variety of others need to be accommodated in such models to adequately account for the variation in school outcomes that is not accounted for by student ability and socioeconomic status. The proposed Louisiana SPM as of this writing does not yet adequately accommodate these important factors. Thus, the SPM, though wrapped in the language of enhancing equity and excellence in education in Louisiana's schools, seems yet another politically-based initiative that is being develop in a manner that ignores much of what is known about the everyday life of schools and schooling.

A Model for Analyzing Statewide Reform Initiatives: Implications for Equity and Excellence in Education

Understanding large-scale, policy-based efforts for school reform, improvement and/or producing excellence and equity in schools, we believe, can be greatly facilitated by rethinking frameworks and models for the development, implementation and evaluation of policy-based initiatives. We believe such models have the potential to reduce the noted lack of success or failure of many reforms (we briefly discussed one recent reform in Louisiana here and describe another popular reform that is in the process of development). Our proposed framework includes three levels of analysis for understanding the impact (or lack of impact) of large-scale reform initiatives seeking to enhance the

equity and excellence of schools: 1) **Macroanalysis** (external environment); 2) **Mesoanalysis** (school internal organizational and sociocultural environment; and 3) **Microanalysis** (classroom environment).

Macroanalysisof policy-based initiatives attempts to understand such initiatives from the perspectives of policy makers, their political constituents, resource allocation, power relations, political costs/benefits, and so on. *We believe that most reform initiatives have been and continue to be analyzed during the course of development, implementation and evaluation from this perspective.* Indeed, the major focus of policy analysis articles in leading policy journals (e.g., Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis) and some classic works in the field (e.g., Nakamura and Smallwood, 1980) seem to utilize macroanalysis as an analytical framework. Assuredly most politicians formulating and monitoring implementation of large-scale reform initiatives use this level of analysis!

Nearly a decade ago policy analysts were accused of focusing too heavily on federal and state educational reforms initiatives founded upon biased research and that had been influenced by the centralization of public education (Murphy & Hallinger, 1984, p.5). It was becoming apparent to educational researchers that if their work was to be used it must deal with those issues of concern to policy makers during a brief window of opportunity (Dockrell, 1987). The time, focus and money given to deal with Macro-level concerns gives a sense of legitimacy to using insights that are exclusive to this perspective. Repeated failure of many reform initiatives however documents the fact that what matters most happens closer to the school (Wang, Haertel & Walberg, 1993) and that Macroanalysis frameworks are not sufficient for providing the needed insights to foresee potential failure. Thus, macroanalyses of large-scale policy-based initiatives in the case of the statewide teacher evaluation illustrate how attempts to gain poltical support [e.g, implementing a teacher pay raise] diverted the

focus from the original intent of the assessment and review process. Instead, the legislature was forced to deal with emerging legal demands which in effect maintained rewards of the initiative [an associated teacher pay raise] yet somehow discarded the evaluations upon which pay raises would be based (Johnson, 1996). In the case of the School Performance Model, attention is forced on cost justifications and if implemented, consequences for following the political breezes that tend to sway in favor of attaching high stakes consequences for schools failing to measurement up. Concerns that consume time and effort at the macro-level include: Origin of the policy [deciphering rhetoric from intent]; possible tradeoffs to gain political support [e.g., accountability or salary issues]; time needed for meaningful change to take place. It is due to the time and effort consumed by having to deal with macro issues that explains while macroanalysis may be necessary, it is no longer sufficient for dealing with meaningful educational reform.

Mesoanalysisof policy initiatives includes filtering policy implementation elements through a school level lens that appreciates what is known and understood about schools as complex social systems and organizations. Implementation analysts emerged with new information that was based upon a framework (McLaughlin, 1987) which allowed issues to be examined that were otherwise obstructed by the use of macro-vision. An important finding from this work was that in some cases there exists a legitimate need for teachers and school administrators to "change" a policy that has been grounded in macroanalysis. For example, some researchers found that what appeared from a distance as the unwillingness of teacher and school administrators to change, were the effects of placing "policy into practice (McLaughlin,1987; Murphy,1989)." Frameworks supporting Mesoanalysis (McDonnell, 1987) help us examine the "multistage," "multi actor complexities" such as those just described which are the result of large-scale policy-based initiatives. In addition, school organizational context

concerns have also been addressed in studies of teacher evaluation (Darling-Hammond, L., Wise, A.P., & Pease, S., 1983).

Various models for policy analysis have attempted to explain the decision/policy-making process. One, the four functional model (Campbell and Mazzoni, 1976) of hierarchical *decision making* for example was adapted for *policy making*. However, this model leaves analysts holding the assumption that once a top-down decision is made it will automatically be carried out (Meisels, 1985). Important lessons learned from implementation analysts include the finding that some policies have "sustaining effects" while others have "vanishing effects (Malen,1987)." In addition, this perspective has shown us that both top down and bottom up strategies are most effective for meaningful reform and why (Boyd, 1987; Darling-Hammond, 1990). Policies require "care and sophistication" as part of the strategy for implementation from a top down approach and when successful, policies will undergo "mutual adaptation (Rand Change Agent Study)" from the school level (Boyd, 1987).

With regards to equity and excellence in education, the state, federal and district roles [macro-level] are clearly to provide "firm direction and support ... setting the values and parameters... and allowing maximum individual autonomy (Boyd, p.92)." Furthermore, individual autonomy was found to be essential to success because when "regulations" extend beyond their intended role to ensure "program integrity" and begin to impact service delivery (clearly the intended role of the teacher), "program quality" is unintentionally made less efficient (Odden, 1987). This happened in California, when program regulations to ensure that dollars were provided for categorical services influenced the structure of pedagogy. Students were pulled out of their regular classrooms so that they could receive special services paid for by categorical dollars (Odden, 1987). It took this California public school system 15 years to finally implement the policy initiative to the satisfaction of those concerned.

Mesoanalysis then, we believe, is a must if policy-based initiatives are to impact schools and be sustained in the everyday life of schools over time. Schools are unique social units that adapt to changes in their external environment (such as new policy mandates) in ways that exchange resources and/or ideas in a standardized manner. This view is consistent with what is known about schools as complex social systems and organizations. Thus, the success or failure of reforms such as Louisiana's past statewide teacher evaluation efforts and the new proposed School Performance Model may well depend upon a careful analysis of policy implementation elements in view of what is known about schools as complex social systems. Concerns that must be dealt with at the meso-level include : Translating policy into practice [will the means become the ends]; time to adapt to proposed changes [will the next administration replace intiatives in process]; fidelity of implementation [will repeated adjustments to the policy subvert program integrity, instead causing errors and abuses within]; will educational goals be achieved through the proposed policy and program chosen as the means?

The **Microanalysis** level of our policy analysis framework, we believe, is perhaps the most important of all... particularly for policy initiatives that target enhanced educational equity and excellence. The classroom level is where the core technology in schools (teaching) has the most impact on attaining excellence (learning). *Therefore, impacting the quality of teaching and learning at the classroom level should be a major goal of any policy-based reform initiative.* Norms of teacher autonomy in most schools are rather strong, and finding ways to develop and implement policies that impact the everyday life of classrooms, in positive ways (ways that enhance equity and excellence), while maintaining reasonable levels of teacher autonomy and professionalism is not an easy task. The microanalysis level in our proposed framework provides the opportunity to think policy-based initiatives through to their potential impact on the everyday life of classrooms where most

teaching and learning for all takes place. In a sense, we argue that the most important level of analysis for policy-based initiatives in education have been poorly formulated and implemented because of their lack of focus on our meso and micro analysis levels. The Louisiana statewide teacher evaluation effort described above is a case in point. For example, the data presented above suggest that a thorough analysis of policies targeting improvement in teaching and learning in schools would have superseded political concerns about teachers' lifetime certification and centered more strongly on the assessment and improvement of everyday practice. The approach would seemingly have had a far greater, potential impact on enhancing learning equity among students in Louisiana's classrooms.

Although still under development, the school performance model can benefit from the microanalysis perspective by guiding the focus of policy development toward the core technology used to produce student achievement scores [teaching and learning]. Questions that must be dealt with at the micro-level include: Will equity and excellence be achieved using the initiative; will teaching quality and student learning be improved; will teacher autonomy be adversely effected by policy components; how can impediments be accommodated so that implementation of the initiative is successful. Thus, we argue for a kind of inside out analysis of policy-based initiatives in education targeting the enhancement of equity and excellence, the kind of analysis that typically would *begin* at the microanalysis level.

Conclusion

This paper is important because it raises a set of historical and contemporary issues related to understanding educational reform and school improvement within the larger context of enhancing educational equity and excellence in schools. The arguments proposed and examples provided suggest

that most large-scale, policy-based educational reform initiatives in American education have essentially failed...and/or have failed to be maintained...because of a lack of understanding of schools as complex organizations and sociocultural entities, failure to understand issues related to meaningful educational change, and faulty conceptions of the meaning of excellence and equity in education. The equity and excellence perspective presented in this paper is grounded in operationally defining these important egalitarian constructs in terms of the quality of actual teaching and learning **processes** at the classroom level (microanalysis), and secondarily at the individual school level (mesoanalysis). This perspective is considered a viable alternative to other views of equity and excellence in American education (e.g.,equal resource allocation, access to schools, implementation of school accountability programs through the use of standardized achievement test scores, etc.). The conceptual framework/model presented will provide educational policy makers, researchers and theorists with a broadened set of perspectives to consider when attempting to understand why large-scale, policy-based initiatives typically fail to enhance equity and excellence among schools. In addition and importantly, the paper generates and provides a strong rationale for the following working proposition using the literature cited and the working examples presented/discussed:

P: Future policy-based initiatives to enhance equity and excellence in America's schools will only be sustained and successful to the extent that they are designed and primarily understood at the microanalysis level (and secondarily at the mesoanalysis level).

This paper presents two recent large-scale policy-based reform initiatives targeting the enhancement of educational equity and excellence in Louisiana as problematic examples of faulty

policy development and implementation. It also argues the need to rethink these processes in the future in view of what is known about the everyday life of schools and classrooms. A major conclusion from our thinking in these matters is that failures of many past educational reforms to enhance equity and excellence in education are tied to policy analysis models that primarily focus on macroanalysis concerns.

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TABLE 1
Percentage of Maximum Possible for Teaching and Learning Components for Each Dimension of the STAR
(Indicators = 108)
(N = 5720)

EACHING AND LEARNING COMPONENTS	# of Indicators	Maximum Possible	% of Maximum
ERFORMANCE DIMENSION II: LASSROOM AND BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT			
. Time	8	43,784	72.39
. Classroom Routines	4	21,892	74.17
. Student Engagement	1	5,473	36.87
'. Managing Task-Related Behavior	6	32,838	48.48
. Monitoring and Maintaining Student Behavior	9	49,257	54.21
'ERFORMANCE DIMENSION III: .EARNING ENVIRONMENT			
\. Psychosocial	12	65,676	66.40
I. Physical	4	21,892	88.03
'ERFORMANCE DIMENSION IV: :NHANCEMENT OF LEARNING			
\. Lesson and Activities Initiation	10	54,730	34.45
3. Teaching Methods and Learning Tasks	6	32,838	58.64
C. Aids and Materials	8	43,784	61.78
D. Content Accuracy and Emphasis	7	38,311	49.14
E. Thinking Skills	11	60,203	21.56
F. Clarification	5	27,365	54.28
G. Pace	3	16,419	58.02
H. Monitoring Learning Tasks and Informal Assessment	6	32,838	43.15
. Feedback	4	21,892	33.22
. Oral and Written Communication	4	21,892	94.70

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